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Order of Witchers

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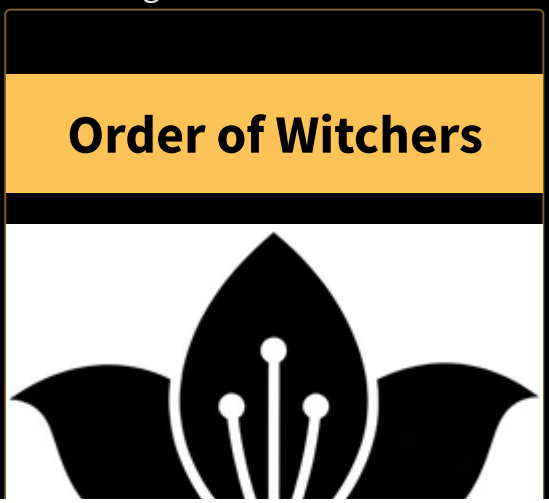
This article is an expansion based on a canon element. For canon information on this topic, follow the link to The Witcher Wiki: **Order of Witchers**.

"As with all inventions and innovations, the impulse came from the military and war. Every commander dreamed of a special operations unit made up of incredibly efficient and invincible superhumans. Every lord and every self-proclaimed king desired a similar bodyguard. The wizards, specifically an elite group known at that time as the Circle, decided to meet this demand. By creating a superhuman, an enhanced version of the human species to a higher level in every respect. In theory -or rather in theories, because there were several-it was about creating a transitional form from which through natural selection, a new, better human race would emerge. The methods varied. Some wizards chose the method of reanimating selected corpses and enhancing the composition of the dead. Others focused on fetuses in the wombs of mothers. Finally, others worked on tiny children. For a long time, there were no results, and the failed subjects ended up in laboratory crematoriums. And the crematoriums smoked continuosly. But in the end, they succeeded after all."

—Preston Holt to a young Geralt of Rivia, about the origins of the witchers

The **Order of Witchers**, originally known as the **Order of the Noble Lilies**, or simply the **Order of the Lilies**, was an attempt carried out by the society of mages known as the Circle and affiliated monarchs to create a transitional form for the improvement of the human species, while also establishing a powerful military asset in the form of magic-using



superhuman warriors who would help them both enhance the species and eliminate enemies they had otherwise been unable to subjugate, enclose in reservations, or exterminate, monsters.

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General Information	
Type	Experimental Knightly Order
Organization Information	
Predecessor	None
Status	Dissolved
Extinction Year	At the end of the 10th century, with the founding of the School of the Wolf
Reason(s) for Extinction	Disputes and conflicts that later became violent among its members
Successor	The four original Witchers schools: • School of the Cat • School of the Bear • School of the Griffin • School of the Wolf
Political Information	
Alignment	Northen Kingdoms (originally)
Key Personel	
Founder(s)	Viduka of Kaedwen An unknown number of other monarchs A number of renegade mages including: • Cosimo Malaspina • Alzur • Idarran of Ulivo
Leader(s)	Alzur and Cosimo Malaspina Rhys (first grandmaster, in the later traditional witcher fashion)

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Notable member(s)	Alzur Arnaghad Cosimo Malaspina Deglan Erland of Larvik Kodan Ivar "Evil-Eye" Iwan Madoc Silvester Bugiardo Rhys Klef
Area of Activity	
Headquarters	Rissberg Castle Morgraig Mirabel Bean Grudd Kaer Morhen
Location	Varied, depending on the mutation and training centre in question.
Area(s) served	Northern Kingdoms, later most of the Western Coast (Old Continent)

History

Origins

Proto-Witchers and First Witchers (900s - 950s A.R.)

At some point during the 900s and the 950s, what would eventually become a witcher took its first steps. With the Circle, taking advantage of the request made by the monarchs of the back then young Northern Kingdoms to make human colonization successful, who had commissioned, as stated earlier, the mages of

that organization to create magic-wielding warriors to deal with the monsters for them.

It must be noted that this effort was heavily influenced by the sorceress Lylianna, later referred to as the *Mother of Witchers* due to her relationship with Alzur. Possessing the prestige of having been a student of the mage Raffard "the White", Lylianna conducted a campaign as she moved between the different kingdoms as an advisor, advocating for the extermination of monsters due to her idealism—especially when it came to ending the suffering of common people and safeguarding the progress of humanity in the North.

Members of the organization attempted many different ways to carry out this task while simultaneously pursuing their broader agenda of improving the human species, but the results were either disappointing or led nowhere.

The Advances of Kaer Seren (940s – 950s A.R.)

During this decade, Alzur and his allies, among them his master Cosimo Malaspina moved their experiments to the castle of Kaer Seren, on the coast of Poviss. There, they experimented on adult human subjects in an attempt to perfect their idea of a formula for creating this magic-wielding warrior and thus give rise to the first witchers. However, this endeavor led to a dead end, as all the subjects either died or became failed experiments that the mages were forced to eliminate.

At some point during this period, Alzur's apprentice, Idarran of Ulivo, joined the project, helping to resolve some of the issues encountered. Unfortunately, his contributions only managed to slightly prolong the survival of the test subjects, or to reduce the extent to which they transformed into what can only be described as aberrations.

Eventually, the mages, worn out by the fruitless experiments and disturbed by the growing number of specters haunting the castle—specters that could not be laid to rest, as their deaths were caused by the mages themselves—decided to abandon the fortress.

Beginnings

The Key Breakthrough and the Fundation of the Order of Witchers (950s A.R.)

It would not be until the late 950s that progress would finally be made. The later-legendary mage Alzur, accidentally created a mutagenic virus, an anatoxin that advanced the project. After experiments had been carried out across at least three different centers— the already mentioned, Kaer Seren along with Kaer Morhen, and Beann Grudd—the virus was refined into the decoctions necessary to create witchers, earning Alzur the title *Father of Witchers*.

However, this would not occur before Alzur suffered a setback: the theft of these decoctions by his apprentice Idarran of Ulivo, who wished to accelerate the process as quickly as possible. Idarran departed for the citadel of Morgraig (later Mirabel) in order to carry out the experiment there, hoping to eliminate the monster problem sooner to benefit all mankind, not only the rich and the powerful. His attempt failed, giving rise to what could be described as a proto-witcher.

Later on, the Circle would accuse Idarran of planning world domination, among other things. This would ultimately lead to his complete fall into villainy, as Idarran began using his knowledge to create monstrous beings with which to hunt the Circle itself, having been turned into a pariah by the very organization he believed he had served in good faith.

Additionally, at some point after Idarran's actions—drawing on his studies—Alzur would suffer a personal tragedy: the death of his partner Lylianna Mirabel, who had assisted him throughout the entire process. Together they tested the decoctions on a man who transformed into a monstrous creature and killed Lylianna within the fortress of Morgraig, which Alzur would later rename Mirabel in her honor.

Following Lylianna's death, Alzur experimented with the mutagenic virus on various women—more specifically witches, due to their magical potential. These women were later exterminated by the Circle to avoid potential complications.

The result was the second version of proto-witchers: the children born from these women. These children were presented as proof that the project was progressing, which in turn led to funding from the monarchs and the founding of the Order of the Noble Lilies, later popularly known as the Order of Witchers. This also provided the first reason for the name "*witchers*", as they were literally the sons of witches.

With funding secured and royal approval obtained, the project was moved to the experimental center at Rissberg Castle, where the first true witchers, from 38

boys and girls, were created with the process of administering the decoctions later called the Trial of the Grasses. However, the survivors, due to their limited magical potential, they were deemed failures.

This led to the second origin of the name "*witcher*." Coupled with the recruits' lineage as the progeny of witches, the mages derisively dismissed them using the coined term "witchers"—*charlatans capable of nothing more than mere witchery*.

Over time, this derogatory term evolved into the popular designation of the Order and, eventually, the name of the profession itself.

After being expelled from Rissberg, Alzur and the Circle relocated to Mirabel, where they continued pursuing both goals—despite the project being branded a failure. In doing so, they effectively became renegade mages.

Later years

The Death of Alzur and the Decentralization of the Order (960s A.R.)

Alzur would not remain in charge of the organization for long, nor would the mages of the Circle, who were gradually hunted down either by organizations such as The Praetorship because of their label as renegade mages or by the monstrosities created by Idarran. This led the legendary mage to recruit many apprentices to his cause, both to replace the fallen mages and eventually to replace himself, as the death of Lylianna affected him more and more with time, until he could bear it no longer and abandoned the Order sometime during the 960s.

Afterward, Alzur—in the process to revive his beloved Lylianna—accidentally summoned a viy using his famous spell Alzur's Double Cross, which destroyed half of the city of Maribor and killed him.

With Alzur dead, his acolytes became divided on how to proceed with the mutations, and in order to determine which method was superior, they decentralized the Order into two additional centers, previously used by Alzur himself: Kaer Morhen and Beann Grudd.

The three institutions recognized the growing demand for witchers due to how severely monsters affected people's lives, and thus focused on mass-producing them regardless of the circumstances, a path that ultimately paved the way for the fall of the Order, along with the further divisions that arose among the witchers themselves following the split among the mages.

The Origin of the Medallions with Animal or Similar Creatures Heads

The origin of the later medallions bearing the heads of animals or similar creatures, and later the schools each represented by an animal or creature, dates back to the later years of the Order, when it was, as mentioned before, decentralized into as many as three different centers: Beann Grudd, Morgraig (later renamed Mirabel as stated before as well), and Kaer Morhen.

In these centers, the mages—seeking to differentiate witchers from each location due to the unique approach each had toward the mutations, and based on the behavior they displayed after undergoing the various Trials of the Grasses of each center—would literally scar them with tattoos depicting an animal indicative of how the mutations had affected them cognitively.

This was done because it was still a single order, despite being divided across three centers. In this way, both witchers and affiliated mages could know where each individual came from and act accordingly.

Thus originated several groups: an unknown group in Mirabel, of which only records survived indicating that their results were worse than those of Beann Grudd; the eagles, also from Mirabel, those who did not show abnormal cognitive changes after mutation; the unstable cats from Beann Grudd; and the middle ground between the eagles of Mirabel and the cats of Beann Grudd, the wolves of Kaer Morhen.

The First Witchers (960s - 970s A.R.)

After nearly a decade of intense work by Alzur, and a growing group of collaborators—including, as mentioned before, mages, along with alchemists, errant knights, and hunters—the first generation of witchers was ready to walk the Path.

These first five were: Madoc, the future founder of the School of the Griffin; Erland of Larvik, the future founder of the first iteration of the School of the Cat; Kodan, the future founder of the School of the Bear; Arnaghad; and finally, Rhys, destined to become the first grandmaster of the Order in the traditional sense later associated with the witcher schools.

Arnagh

a d i n h i s l a t e r y e a r s

In the following decades, as mentioned prior, recruitment became increasingly intensive and masive. This was due to the demand, the extreme mortality rate of the Trials, combined with the general lack—or inaccuracy—of knowledge about many monsters at the time and also the constant fear among the mages of losing these early subjects, since they were considered invaluable both scientifically and as the foundation for the continuation of the Order.

In this years, the last known group of marked witchers, key to the origin of the later schools would appear. The bears, who were known for their solitary nature and autistic tendencies.

At some point during this period, a series of converging factors—chief among them Alzur's eventual abandonment of the project and his death, along with a escalating debate among mages regarding the ethics of the mutation process—led to the gradual collapse of two of the original witcher centers, Kaer Morhen and Beann Grudd.

In the case of the first, this decision stemmed directly from the troubling incidents at Beann Grudd. It is important to stay, that the fortress was in construction back then, which cause, that, after the closure, to be left unfinished by the departing mages and personnel. Following its abandonment, Kaer Morhen fell into elven hands and was name it in the way it would be later known. The elves occupied the stronghold and eventually completed its construction, though not for the same purpose as its original founders, as it was transformed into an elven military outpost. It would remain under elven control until sometime around the 1060s, when it was vacated once more, following the death of its elven occupants during Aelirenn's failed rebellion.

This internal conflict was largely fueled by alarming outcomes such as those at Beann Grudd, where witchers exhibited extreme instability, a disturbing inclination toward cruelty, and even enjoyment in killing. Furthermore, several unintended mutations, particularly at Mirabel, produced even worse results than those seen in Beann Grudd. Although these problems were swiftly eliminated at Mirabel, the damage to the project's credibility —already damage to what happened at Rissberg— was done.

As a consequence, both Beann Grudd and Kaer Morhen were ultimately shut down, leaving only Mirabel, as the last remaining operational centers of the Order. Later on, it would be Mirabel (or Morgraig as many witchers later called it) that

would serve as the genesis that would later gave rise to the first witcher schools.

In this decade also, the bulk of the Order's witchers were created—and likewise, many of them perished during these years.

The severe attrition rate was a direct result of early misclassification of monsters and insufficient understanding of their abilities, weaknesses, and behaviors. One notable tragedy from this era was the death of Klef, who fell victim to one of the first energumens ever officially recorded by the Order.

The Brief Golden Age of the Order (970 - 972 A.R.)

The 970s would paradoxically represent both the golden age of the Order, albeit briefly, and the beginning of its end.

This was due in part to the abandonment of the project by most of the mages, as the mutation process increasingly sparked ethical debate among them, together with the closure of Beann Grudd and Kaer Morhen for the same reasons, as previously mentioned.

This left Mirabel as the only remaining seat of the Order, and the witchers largely to their own devices under the command of their first grandmaster already mentioned, witcher Rhys.

Rhys oversaw the expansion of witchers across almost the entire western coast, carrying out their duties against monsters, which is why this period is considered the Order's golden age.

However, the departure of the mages also marked the beginning of the Order's decline, as Rhys's leadership proved weak. It was inevitable that, once members of the other fortresses were absorbed into Mirabel after the closure of their respective centers, debates similar to those the mages had held regarding the ethics of the mutation process would begin among the witchers themselves concerning their profession and code.

These debates, along with other lesser factors mentioned earlier and later, eventually led to violent incidents, which in turn resulted in the dissolution of the Order and the creation of the witcher schools.

During its 45 years of existence, the Order of the Witchers counted approximately 505 members (not counting mages and other personnel). Of these, only around 170 were still alive by the time the Order began to disband.

The Decline of the Order and the Birth of the Schools of the Bear, Viper, and Manticore (971 – 972 A.R.)

As the witcher Erland entered his late forties, however, it was one particular incident who proved to be the catalyst for the Order's end. By then, reports of witchers cheating each other out of contracts and engaging in deadly confrontations became increasingly common. Upon returning from a year from the Path, Erland discovered that the witcher Arnaghad attacked Grandmaster Rhys, nearly killing him. Realizing the dire state of the Order, Erland and his brothers prepared to confront Arnaghad and put an end to the infighting. Upon returning to Morgraig, Arnaghad brought with him a posse of like-minded witchers most of them of the bear group mentioned earlier. And a confrontation ensued between the Order and Arnaghad's group, steel drawn and flanked each side by a posse of brothers, the fight soon turned brutal. Erland was wounded but managed to drive Arnaghad back using Aard. Though the Order emerged victorious, it suffered heavy losses. Arnaghad and his surviving followers fled to the Amell Mountains, where he would later found the School of the Bear. A year afterward, a group of Bear witchers would betray the school and nearly kill Arnaghad; these defectors would in turn travel to the Tir Tochair Mountains and found the School of the Viper.

Around the same time as the schism within the Bear School—during one of the members of the schism, Ivar -Evil Eye, failed attempt to take control—a faction within his group broke off. Among them was a witcher named Iwan, who, along with others disillusioned with Ivar's methods, abandoned the plan. As Ivar's group continued toward the mountains to establish the Viper School, Iwan and his companions diverted instead toward the Elskerdeg Pass.

This pass marked the edge of the infamous Korath Desert, a region frequently crossed by Zerrikanian caravans attempting to trade with the western region of the Old Continent. In this hostile environment, Iwan's group transitioned from being mere monster hunters to skilled escorts, defending merchant caravans across the treacherous desert routes.

One day, while traveling the Korath, Iwan's group encountered a royal Zerrikanian caravan under attack by a pair of manticores. They intervened and slew the monsters. Among the caravan's members was Nasira Faizan, Court Mage to the Zerrikanian Queen. Impressed by their skill, Nasira offered them generous payment and an audience with the Queen—if they could escort her safely home.

The witchers agreed.

Upon arriving at the Zerrikanian capital, Nasira recounted the exploits of the alqatils (Zerrikanian: slayers), and the Queen extended an offer: if they agreed to work exclusively for the crown—guarding caravans and emissaries—Zerrikania would construct two fortresses to support the growth of a new witcher school. The witchers accepted, and thus two castles were built: Behelt Nar in the west and Bialsuf Alsarea in the east, where Iwan would later remain. This marked the birth of the School of the Manticore.

The Order and the First Schools (972 – 986 A.R.)

Following the incident involving the confrontation between Rhys and the rest of the Order against Arnaghad and his allies—and therefore the birth of the School of the Bear, along with its two subsequent offshoots, the School of the Viper and the School of the Manticore—the Order entered a strange period lasting nearly two decades.

During this time, it was forced to deal with the consequences of losing members and, consequently, resources that had allowed it to remain independent. At the same time, it had to compete fiercely with the newly emerging witcher training centers, which gradually began developing methods that were more specialized, more unique to themselves, more efficient, and ultimately more professional, thereby earning the respect of the people.

Some of these schools—such as the School of the Viper—even began accepting contracts to eliminate humans and non-humans, which in turn earned them the support (and therefore the resources and better equipment) of those interested in such services—that is, the rich and the powerful. However, it should be noted that, unlike the future Cats, the Vipers would still maintain their neutrality.

As a result, slowly but inevitably, the Order began to turn into a relic of the past, increasingly less useful. This led its remaining members to begin questioning their place within it. Gradually, the seeds of its complete extinction grew among those who would become the first Cats (those originating from the closed Beann Grudd), Griffins (those trained and mutated in Mirabel), and Wolves (those originating from the closed Kaer Morhen) as Erland watched frustrated as more and more of his brothers became disillusioned with the Order's tenets, accelerating its decline.

Foundation of the School of the Cat and the School of the Griffin

(986 A.R/998 A.R.)

Eventually, almost 20 years later, a group of twenty young witchers from Beann Grudd, considered failures by the rest of their peers due to their origin, left the Order led by the half-elf Kodan, wanting to create a better Order than the existing one which would earned them the respect of the mighty and the poor of the Old Continent and prove the rest of the witchers that they weren´t a failure as they said. These young witchers would later found the first iteration of the School of the Cat. Search parties were sent after them, but the defectors were never found.

As they departed, they took with them a significant quantity of mutagenic compounds and alchemical equipment, intending to refine and improve the formulas used in the witcher mutations. Thus, *de jure*, though still unnamed, the school was born in 986 A.R. As their journey led them in search of the mages who had once served at Beann Grudd, in the hopes of recruiting them and obtaining more stable mutation methods—especially after their initial roadside experiments resulted in dangerous failures.

After twelve years of travel, they—along with some of the mages who were eventually convinced—reached the ruins of Beann Grudd. There, they adopted the name School of the Cat based on the previous designation used by the mages, forged the first cat medallions. And so, *de facto*, with name and form, the School of the Cat was officially born in 998 A.R.

The remaining members of the Order carried on for a time, as the disillusion turned into a more utilitarian outlook. However, during one harsh winter, Erland made a decision: it was time to leave.

Gathering thirteen of his closest companions, Erland announced to the last remnants of the Order that they would be leaving to create their own school. Unlike previous schisms, Erland viewed the Order as his family and wished to part on good terms. The group left peacefully and traveled northwest, toward the Dragon Mountains and the coasts of Poviss, in search of another of the fortres used by Alzur, the back then ruined fortress of the *Castle of the Stars*, Kaer Seren. Notable members of this group included Dante, Ratko, and Jerdone.

Upon reaching Kaer Seren, they found the fortress still haunted by specters. After dispelling the spirits and claiming the castle, Erland discovered a standing stone in the courtyard and realized the fortress had been built atop a confluence of air magic. This source of magical energy helped define one of the school's core

characteristics. From then on, Kaer Seren became the stronghold of the Griffin School.

Reflecting on his ideals, Erland resolved that his school would honor the noble, knightly purpose for which witchers were originally created as Idarran intended when he stole the decoctions. As a tribute to his long-dead fencing mentor during his time in the Order, the Vicovarian knight errant Taliesin Bleddyn Yorath aep Lywelyn, nicknamed Griffin due the coat of arms in his shield by his students, who instilled a lot of the knightly values he had, he adopted the symbol of the griffin and named the school accordingly. Though its early years were challenging, Kaer Seren soon became a home—and the fires of the great hall roared once again. A key difference with other schools, was that Erland and his brothers shared the same values, united in their mission.

Under Erland's leadership, the School of the Griffin emphasized honor, discipline, and a commitment to noble ideals. They developed a training style focused on preparedness, flexibility, and Signs—traits that would define the Griffin school for centuries. Another defining feature was their codified neutrality, which marked the first true articulation of the Witcher's Code, based on the knightly code of Taliesin, with some key modifications.

Like the knightly orders of old, they adopted a motto that encapsulated their values: *Per Virtutem et Honorem Fortes (Strong Through Virtue and Honor),*— inscribed at the school's entrance beneath a depiction of the griffin from Taliesin's shield.

The school would later reclaim the griffin name in earnest after a campaign to exterminate actual griffins in the Dragon Mountains. The common folk, however, often mistook the griffin carved on their medallions—beak agape—for an eagle, giving rise to the alternate moniker: the *School of the Eagle*. Ironically, without knowing it, that many of its earliest members had been cognitively classified by mages in this way in their day.

Foundation of the School of the Wolf (995 A.R.)

By 995 A.R., the Order of Witchers had all but collapsed. Only a small group remained at Morgraig following the departure of the three major factions to found their own schools. Led by the witcher Deglan, this final group lingered at the keep for nearly two decades after the initial fracturing before embarking on a journey eastward.

Settling in within the caves of the Morhen Valley, they began training and mutating there away from everything. But it was not until the 1060s A.R. that they stumbled upon the abandoned elven fortress of Kaer Morhen, which they claimed as their own, once the elves never returned, all of this under the leadership of it's first grandmaster, the already mentioned witcher Deglan, establishing Kaer Morhen as the school's permanent stronghold.

Thus, the last direct heirs of the Order established the School of the Wolf, putting to an end the Order of Witchers of old.

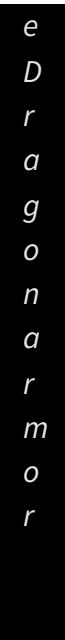
Characteristics

The Order employed heavy armor, either leather with a chainmail hauberk worn over it, or fully metallic armor, following the traditional knightly arrangement of gambeson, chainmail, and then plate armor. The helmet covered the upper part of the head and the neck, leaving the field of vision largely exposed except for a facial mask covering the front of the face. Beneath the helmet, a mail coif was also commonly worn, covering almost the entire head except for the face area.

The more knightly style of armor was primarily used during the Order's early years, while the leather-based armor appeared during its later period, largely due to the influence of arrivals from Beann Grudd and Kaer Morhen, where the armor began to take on its final form. There was even a transitional period—during the final years of those two centers—when two intermediate armor types existed before eventually converging into the final design. This armor would later evolve into the light armor of the School of the Cat and the medium armor of the School of the Wolf. The armor used during the earliest years, by contrast, evolved into that of the School of the Griffin, with few notable changes aside from the removal of the chainmail coif and a reduction in weight, shifting from heavy to medium armor.

Order of Witchers armor in its later School of th

As for the armor that eventually took on a more unique design, this was evident in the School of the Wolf, which utilized the old order's armor to subject its students to the Trial of the Sword. It's also possible that this armor had an impact on lands as distant as the Tuyotuki Islands, given the similarities in design with the armor worn by samurais on the islands. Many speculate that the splinter group from the School of the Manticore, which founded the School

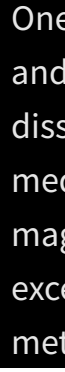


of the Dragon, carried armor from the fallen order, influencing the design of the armors worn by these warriors from the Far East. However, it could also be a mere coincidence, since their designs are very similar, which could have led to the early members of the School of the Dragon adopting them as armor because they resembled the order's armor.

During its early years, the Order used swords similar to those of other knightly orders. In its later period, however, it adopted slightly curved, much thinner blades resembling the katanas of the distant Tuyotuki Islands, allowing for increased speed.

At least three distinct combat styles were taught across the different centers. The style of the Nine Sun Swords, or in Nilfgaardian *Naev'de Feaine Glaeddyv*, developed in the city of Viroledo in Vicovaro and brought to Mirabel by the Vicovarian knight-errant Taliesin, would become the foundational style of the School of the Griffin. The fast style, taught at Beann Grudd, known as Addan Aenye, was developed by the elven poet and swordsman Nissail and would later become the foundational style of the School of the Cat. The strong style, known as Temerian Devil, developed by Temerian landsknechts and taught at Kaer Morhen by those same soldiers, would become the foundational style of the School of the Wolf.

The shield-based combat style of the School of the Manticore, meanwhile, was derived from the fighting techniques of Zerrikanian warrior women and thus developed much later. The dual-sword style of the School of the Viper, known as the Fangs of the Viper, was likewise developed by them at a later time. The style of the School of the Bear, known as the Claws of the Bear, resulted from a blend of the Nine Sun Swords and Temerian Devil styles, with a greater emphasis on powerful strikes due to the Bears' use of heavy armor and consequently reduced mobility.



One of the central pieces of equipment utilized by the Order of Witchers, and later adopted by subsequent schools that emerged following its dissolution, was an enchanted silver medallion as mentioned later. This medallion served as an alert system for detecting dangers, magic, or magical beings. However, it was not infallible and could be deceived by exceptionally potent illusions, creatures like dopplers or Higher vampires, metals like dimeritium, among other things for instance.

The design of this medallion was round and flat, taking its inspiration both in terms of function and materials from the previously mentioned enchanted silver medallion that Alzur, had gifted to his girlfriend, the sorceress Lylianna, before her passing. After the disbandment of the order, the medallion underwent a design evolution. Each subsequent school incorporated their emblematic animal or creature symbol, typically depicting its head with jaws agape (or the equivalent), positioned laterally as a visual representation of their affiliation with the guild.

hhermedallio

Of course, there were exceptions. Some schools, like the School of the Scorpion and the School of the Spider, chose insects as their symbols, representing the creatures in their entirety. Others, like the ambitious but failed endeavor that was the School of the Siren in the Far North, adopted a more literal interpretation of the head in their medallion. Schools like the School of the Lion in Zangvebar, which were born under the original premise of the School of the Cat: *'That they could improve the mutation process and build a better order on their own, surpassing their predecessor and commanding the respect of both the poor and the mighty of the Continent,'* displayed the head of the animal frontally, and not laterally, as a sign of their determination to create a better order than the Order of Witchers. And lastly, schools like the School of the Crane after the Second Conjunction of Spheres depicted the Crane head in a non-aggressive stance, with its beak closed, not only for the elegance of the chosen animal as a symbol, but also to symbolize their role as protectors against threats from both the sky and the sea.

Additionally, unlike the later witcher schools, the witchers of the Order placed greater emphasis on the use of elixirs during combat, largely due to the lack of reliable information about many of the monsters they faced. They were also less dependent on the medallion, as the device—especially in the early years—was not yet fully developed as a tool and, much like Lylianna's original pendant, suffered from numerous flaws.

In moral terms, the Order possessed no formal code (one of the reasons for its eventual downfall), but rather a set of behavioral norms that were so vague that each witcher interpreted them in their own way.

Classification

As a knightly order, during its early beginnings—namely in Rissberg—the project was considered an experimental secular multi-state knightly order, given its funding by various monarchs and its intended function. In fact, it was the only order of its kind.

After the project was deemed a failure and its funding withdrawn, it came to be regarded instead as an experimental private secular knightly order, due to its new primary patron, Alzur.

Economy of the Order

In its early years, the Order was sustained by the wealth of the mages involved in the project, particularly that of Alzur and Cosimo Malaspina. After Alzur's death, and the closure of the other two centers which had already drained much of the available resources, Cosimo's wealth continued to finance the Order's existence, even after his own death, which occurred naturally due to old age. The mages' secondary sources of income disappeared alongside them when they left the project.

However, by the 980s, this financial reserve had been exhausted, largely due to the events surrounding Arnaghad and his allies, among other factors such as the rising cost of living across the Northern Kingdoms and the prolonged absence of any figure responsible for regulating the Order's finances. As a result, during the final years of its existence, the position of Treasurer was created. The treasurer collected a portion of the earnings that witchers brought back to Mirabel each winter in order to cover expenses and maintain the institution.

This practice would later be imitated by several of the witcher schools that managed to maintain their neutrality. The only notable exceptions among the neutral schools were the School of the Wolf, which received financial compensation from the Crown of Kaedwen after the pogrom, and the School of the Griffin, which received funds from the bourgeois owners of the mines of Kovir following the avalanche that destroyed their fortress, in exchange for dealing with the monsters inhabiting the deep underground.

It should also be noted that, unlike the fortresses of the later witcher schools, Mirabel was a citadel, and therefore most of its food supplies were purchased from the nearby city rather than produced locally. The Order did not maintain its own farms.

Hierarchy of the Order

The hierarchy of the Order imitated, in many respects, those of other knightly orders of the time, though with several notable changes due to its experimental nature. Later on, the witcher schools would take this hierarchy as a reference, introducing various changes here and there depending on the idiosyncrasy of each school.

Thus, from highest to lowest, the hierarchy was as follows:

- **Grandmaster**: The undisputed leader. During the existence of the Order there were only two: Alzur, and later Rhys, who was chosen by Alzur's apprentices since none of them could agree on who should lead after his death.
- **Wisemaster**: A very veteran member who could act as Grandmaster if necessary, and in fact did so during the decentralization of the Order. Beann Grudd and Kaer Morhen each had one instead of a Grandmaster during the time they functioned as Order strongholds.
- **Greatmaster**: A highly experienced member specialized in a particular field. They were essentially equivalent to senior professors within the Order.
- **Mage**: Responsible for the mutations, sometimes also acting as advisors to the Wisemasters and the Grandmaster alongside the Greatmasters. They also served as instructors in the use of the Signs, though this depended on a sub-hierarchy among the mages.
- **Treasurer**: Responsible for organizing the accounts, managing and protecting the Order's funds, collecting a portion of the money earned by other witchers, and administering the Order's resources.
- **Guardian**: Responsible for supervising that everything functioned properly among the students, the various teaching staff, and the Majors. They reported to the mages, Greatmasters, Wisemasters, or the Grandmaster himself, and communicated the needs of the students to the Treasurer.
- **Master Witcher**: A witcher who was no longer a novice but not yet a veteran —essentially someone who had spent a certain amount of time on the Path. Most witchers of the Order fell within this rank.
- **Various Instructors**: Members of different professions who contributed to shaping witchers into the ultimate hunters. Alchemists, wandering knights, trackers, hunters, and others. Those highest in this category were usually those focused on physical training and the alchemists.

- **Major**: An intermediate rank between Master Witcher, the various instructors, and Witcher. They acted as tutors for groups of students, providing a more general education rather than the specialized instruction given by the instructors.
- **Positipater**: A witcher responsible for caring for one or more infants. If the upbringing proved successful and the children became adepts, the Positipater would be promoted to Major.
- **Witcher**: A newly graduated witcher or one with relatively little time on the Path.
- **Observer**: A novice assigned to a witcher (either newly graduated or of higher rank) in order to learn things that regular training could not provide. Sometimes they could act as the witcher's squire if necessary. Most Observers were novices close to graduating.
- **Novice**: Someone who had survived one or more of the Trials, but who still required significant training. All survivors of the Trial of the Grasses acquired this rank if they lived.
- **Adept**: A newcomer with little or no training who had not yet undergone mutations.
- **Alius**: Workers who, unlike the instructors, did not occupy teaching roles. They handled duties such as repairs, cooking, cleaning, and other essential tasks.

Symbol

The symbol of the Order of Witchers, at least during the period in which Alzur led it—its first decade—was a lily. This was in honor of his partner, the late Lylianna Mirabel, a reference to a lily-shaped pendant that Alzur had gifted her as a symbol of his love.

Theearlymed

This pendant, enchanted to detect monsters and other threats, and also serving as a portable magical reserve, would later serve as the conceptual predecessor of the witcher medallion.

However, due to the problems that gradually arose—along with Alzur's abandonment of the project and his subsequent death, the decentralization of the Order, and the harsh nature of the profession itself—this symbol did not last long. It most likely became a reminder for the first witchers of an idealism that no longer made sense.

allionworeby membersoftheorder

Thus, by the time the Order was nearing its extinction, the symbol had already been replaced—at least regarding the tool that was the medallion—by a plain circular metallic medallion with no markings, which would later adopt the head of an animal or similar creature once the witcher schools were formed.

Legal Attempts to Create Something Similar to the Order

Given its nature as a "*failure*," and its subsequent illegality after Alzur continued the project on his own, other mages attempted to create their own legal versions of what the Order had been.

The most well-known case was that of the haimanegoi, who likewise did not last long, as witchers—although less powerful than them—proved to be far more efficient.

The Defamation Campaign Against the Order

Due both to being considered a "*failure*" and to its status as a private experimental secular knightly order for much of its history—combined with the fact that mutating sentient beings was something prohibited by the Brotherhood of Sorcerers (with the witchers' success being the only exception that had ever allowed such creations to exist), the failure of other projects that had remained within legal boundaries, and its redefinition through the influence of Lylianna, and to a lesser extent Idarran, into a force intended to eliminate all threats to humanity regardless of who or what they were rather than serving merely as a military asset—the mages began a campaign of defamation against the Order.

Over the centuries, this campaign—together with certain questionable actions by various individuals of the profession, particularly those associated with the School of the Cat, as well as the very success of witchers in their work—ultimately led to the downfall of most of the Order's successors, that is, the witcher schools, by the 13th century. Only a few of these institutions survived beyond that time and continued their work, even as a shortage of witchers caused monster populations to rise again alongside the Second Conjunction of the Spheres in 1358, which made the profession even more necessary than it had

been during the time of the Order that had originally given rise to all of them.

As a relevant note, it should be mentioned that a consequence of this defamation campaign was later reflected in the widespread negative stereotypes about witchers throughout the Northern Kingdoms, and sometimes even beyond them. However, these perceptions also depended on other, often more significant factors, such as the local idiosyncrasies of each region, with the propaganda spread by the mages serving merely as the spark that ignited these attitudes.

Notable Staff and Members

For the full list of known Staff and Members of the Order of Witchers see Category: Order of Witchers

Mages

- Adam Nivelle
- Alzur
- Carla Demetia Crest
- Cosimo Malaspina
- Idarran of Ulivo

Other Personnel

- Balinor Ilyech (fencing instructor)
- Nissail (fencing instructor)
- Taliesin Bleddyn Yorath aep Lywelyn (fencing instructor)

Witchers (Part of the Order Only)

- Madoc
- Rhys
- Issar of Velkarth
- Klef

Witchers (School Founders)

Arnaghad´s Group - School of the Bear (and and later it´s two offshoots: the School

of the Viper and Manticore)

1. Adair
2. Ael
3. Afon
4. Agnerg
5. Agra
6. Aideloy of Cidaris
7. Arnaghad
8. Artur "Iron-shod"
9. Avalard
10. Balthazar of the South
11. Bedwyr
12. Bawor
13. Beranchie of Metinna
14. Bohdanu
15. Braning
16. Brer
17. Brerto of Somewhere
18. Brodie
19. Borains
20. Cadwaladr "Powerful Strike"
21. Caradoc
22. Caden
23. Cíeran
24. Cedant of Attre
25. Crirlilf Kernvason
26. Dagorne
27. Denevar
28. Dethefor
29. Draggert
30. Dogizir Tonne
31. Dritan
32. Dorregar
33. Eldor of Maribor
34. Eimyr
35. Erdalon
36. Etenor

37. Eurig "Fast Hands"
38. Firird Vaannog
39. Fynneas
40. Gaelen "the Red"
41. Gheran of Kalkar
42. Gondam Otirt
43. Goran of Gemmera
44. Heate
45. Hagorn
46. Idrise of Ebbing
47. Ingolf Branstad
48. Ivar "Evil Eye"
49. Iwan
50. Jescadd
51. Jhaqo of Nazair
52. Joram of Brugge
53. Jun
54. Kaelet
55. Kastran of Boisec
56. Kerlir of Daerlan
57. Konrad of Rowan
58. Lavr
59. Leszek
60. Lorgan
61. Lysandro of Vicovaro
62. Maellu
63. Malike of the Seas
64. Messarr
65. Mirek of Tretogor
66. More of Marek
67. Movrind "Slow-killer"
68. Nanoys
69. Nevin "Three-Fingers"
70. Nimir
71. Odimoyt of Hengfors
72. Olgak of Maecht
73. Osgar of Beauclair

74. Radek
75. Radovan
76. Rian of Ellander
77. Roderik "the Silent"
78. Roeg
79. Sambor
80. Sek
81. Severin of Ban Ard
82. Tora
83. Telor
84. Terymuo
85. Thomel aep Rykard
86. Torstein Hjortson
87. Voytek
88. Uanog
89. Uldo
90. Yabūg of A´asha
91. Yerget Ettofson
92. Ytos
93. Yuz
94. Ulric of Dorian
95. Utamor
96. Vadin
97. Valgard
98. Vardog
99. Vartagen
100. Vent
101. Vesper of Oxenfurt
102. Wastall
103. Wazrer Delidd
104. Wencell
105. Wilall of Verden
106. Wissimw
107. Yaromir
108. Yoratü "Bone-breaker"
109. Yven
110. Zadro

111. Zane of Spalla
112. Zechar
113. Zelans
114. Zerdebos
115. Zdenek
116. Zoran
117. Zura
118. Zuk Bero
119. Zygfryd of Gors Velen
120. Zyvik

Deglan´s Group - School of the Wolf

1. Adon of Carreras
2. Alger
3. Deglan
4. Barmin
5. Beoc
6. Cael
7. Cascan
8. Colman
9. Elgar
10. Obode
11. Byrnjolf
12. Preston Holt
13. Rennes
14. Reinald

Erland´s Group - School of the Griffin

1. Amergyn
2. Erland of Larvik
3. Castur
4. Dante
5. Jerdone
6. Leon Emben of Mirt
7. Lurde
8. Ratko
9. Silvester Bugiardo

10. Tasafryn aep Taliesin
11. Tiveltilm of Kaedwen
12. Ufach of Baccalà
13. Velcal
14. Volmod of Fano

Kodan´s Group - School of the Cat

1. Almi Nangillel
2. Ari Tristhig
3. Ayco
4. Carnod
5. Citteras Clorantz
6. Colaga
7. Dorba
8. Gragem
9. Gryffyn of Ebbing
10. Fizraron Littilt
11. Folsol
12. Kodan
13. Lasut
14. Tinguaro
15. Matir aep Simda
16. Nir
17. Sturnilo of Ban Gléan
18. Warbatt
19. Zedrid of Cidaris
20. Zildod Roynt

Legacy

The Order's primary legacy was, of course, the witcher schools, which continued its work and expanded the profession beyond the Northern Kingdoms through the rest of the western coast and even beyond such as in the case of the School of the Manticore.

Aside from them, its greatest contribution to the history of the world was the creation of secular knightly orders—as until then all such orders had been

religious in nature. In fact, the Order was a pioneer in this regard, being the first of its kind. Furthermore, when it later transformed into a private institution, it also became the genesis of paramilitary organizations, as it was likewise the first of that type.

Notes

Although *Crossroads of Ravens* tells us that Mirabel, Bean Grudd, and Kaer Morhen were the "*laboratories*" where witchers were created, this does not directly contradict either the lore of the Order of Witchers as developed by R. Talsorian for the TTRPG, nor the existence of the witcher schools. In fact, it enriches the narrative.

On one hand, it justifies why certain fortresses were not simply taken over, but rather *retaken* (as in the case of Kaer Morhen) by the schools—based on their prior use as centers of the Order—rather than having been randomly chosen castles. On the other, it mirrors the way historical knightly orders often had regional headquarters. A notable example is the Order of the Knights Templar, which maintained headquarters in places such as Tomar in Portugal or London.

Once only Morgraig remained—and later, once the Order itself fell—the evolution into the separate witcher schools would have followed naturally. The precedent for this would had already been laid in the issues caused by distance, and thus, regionalization, compounded by the other reasons mentioned in this article, adding further weight to the eventual division of the Order into schools with distinct methods.

Thus, this article seeks to unify both canons, for rather than contradicting one another, they in fact complement each other more closely than it might first appear.

Trivia

- The defamation campaign against the Order is based both on what is canonically known about witchers and on the defamation campaign that the Knights Templar suffered at the hands of the Church.
- Some of the early wolves are references to early Irish saints, one of them, would be a reference / reimagination of "Old Witcher" from The Hexer TV Series.

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